

Hemingway and the Venetian Nobility

By Jobst C. Knigge

In the years between 1948 and 1954 Ernest Hemingway visited Venice, the surrounding Veneto, and Friuli Region three times.¹ He was fascinated by the area where he was wounded as a young voluntary ambulance driver for the American Red Cross during the battles of the First World War. He made friendship with members of four Venetian and Friulian noble families: the Kechler, Franchetti, Robilant and Ivancich. He frequented and socialized with them and was invited to their palaces and country houses. Some places and persons were portrayed in the novel "Across the River and into the Trees".²

Hemingway was no snob searching for the company of the nobility but when he met them he was fond of their aristocratic lifestyle.³ Both were brought together by their common interest in hunting and fishing. It was also the ability of the Italian counts and barons to speak English, in a country that otherwise knew little about foreign languages. "It is important to say that the fondness between Hemingway and the aristocrats was reciprocal", writes Martina Mastandrea.⁴

Hemingway met members of the Italian aristocracy for the first time when in September 1918 he stayed in convalescence at the Grand Hotel in Stresa on the

¹ October 1948 through April 1949, January to March 1950, March to May 1954. When Hemingway stayed at the Piave River in the First World War he was only 20 miles away from Venice, but was not able to visit the town.

² Special thanks for help, information, suggestions, corrections to Rosella Mamoli Zorzi, Davide Lorigliola, Giovanni di Virgilio, Filippo di Robilant, Alessandro Kechler; to Andy Wood for revising the English text .

³ See Martina Mastandrea: The Discreet Charm of Nobility. Ernest Hemingway's Fondness for the Italian Aristocracy, paper presented to the Hemingway Conference, Venice June 2014.

⁴ Paper Mastandrea.

Lago Maggiore after being wounded at the Italian front on the Piave. In a letter he spoke of an “awfully good bunch” of people. One of them he portrayed as Count Greffi in his novel “A Farewell to Arms”. Another one, Count Bellia, he visited together with his wife Hadley in 1922 during a trip to Turin.⁵ Hemingway biographer Carlos Baker concluded: “Ernest reveled in being adopted by Italian nobility.”⁶

The Italian nobles were keen to meet the famous American writer whose books had been banned during the time of fascism. Hemingway himself liked the luxurious lifestyle. He stayed in the Paris “Ritz” and the Venetian “Gritti”. But the next day he could sleep in a tent or on a camp bed or even on the bare ground. One day he enjoyed talking to nobles and film stars like Gary Cooper and Marlene Dietrich, when he would talk for hours to simple fishermen, waiters, barmen or drivers. On his Finca in Cuba nearly every day he was surrounded by a group of former fighters of the Spanish Civil War.⁷

The Franchetti Family

The Franchetti were a Jewish family originally from Leghorn (Livorno). Raimondo Franchetti married to the Austrian Louisa Rothschild laid the ground to the family fortunes. Money was invested in the railway industry, agriculture and real estate. 1858 Raimondo was made a hereditary baron.

In 1878 the family purchased the imposing palazzo on the Canale Grande next to the Accademia bridge, that is still known as the Palazzo Franchetti. Their son Alberto became a well known opera singer and composer. Alberto - now more or less forgotten - was in his time a serious rival of Giacomo Puccini. His operas “Cristoforo Colombo” and “Germania” enjoyed international success. His marriages, duels and car races filled the gossip press.⁸ His son, again named Raimondo (1889-1935), was an explorer of territories in Eastern Africa, especially Ethiopia and Eritrea. He supported the Italian interest of colonial expansion in the area. He never became a member of the Fascist Party, but engaged in the Mussolini’s war in Ethiopia

⁵ See Martina Mastandrea.

⁶ Carlos Baker: Ernest Hemingway, 1959, p. 51.

⁷ Gianfranco Ivancich: Da una felice Cuba a Ketchum, Venice 2008, pp. 16.

⁸ Helmut Krausser: Zwei ungleiche Rivalen. Puccini und Franchetti, Munich 2010.

in 1935. He worked for the military intelligence and was appreciated for his knowledge of the territory and the locals. He died in 1935 in an air crash.

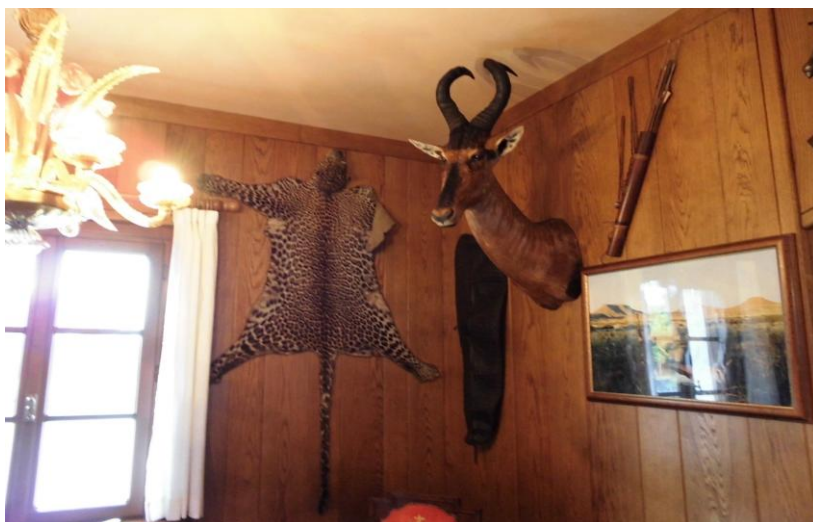


Raimondo Franchetti (Dancalia.it)

With his wife Bianca Mocenigo Rocca, member of an old Doge family, he had four children, some of them he gave names coming from East Africa: Laurentana (Simba), Afdera, Raimondo Nanuk (Nanyuki) and Lorian.⁹ Duke Amedeo D'Aosta, vice-king and governor of Abyssinia from 1936 to 1941, was the godfather of Raimondo Nanuk.

Nanuk married Margherita Arnolfo Levi. He was an enthusiastic sportsman and hunter owning a hunting lodge on the lagoon of Caorle and travelled several times to East Africa for big game.

⁹ Carlos Baker: Hemingway, p. 648: Lorian "was named for a swamp where the father had killed a world record buffalo."



There are still some trophies in the hunting lodge (Photo by the author)



Alberto Franchetti (badigit.comune.bologna) The Palazzo Franchetti

The Kechler Family

The Kechler family originally came from the German Black Forest, an area where some Kechlers still live. They moved to the Habsburg Empire first to Prague, then to Lubljana and Fiume and finally to Udine in the Friuli Region of Northern Italy. The Kechlers in Germany were elevated to barons (1346) and counts (1585), but these titles were not transferred to Italy.¹⁰ So in a strict sense the Italian Kechlers were no aristocrats, but they integrated in the Italian nobility. Carlo Kechler became the business administrator of a big silk company. In 1854 he married the niece of the wealthy owner, Pietro Antivari. From then

¹⁰ Information by Alessandro Kechler.

on he became involved in the flourishing Friulian economy, in the Cotonificio Udinese and the Banca di Udine. His son Roberto led the life of a country gentleman, founding the Friuli Fox Hunting Society. With his wife Costanza dei Conti Crotti di Costiglione he had four sons: Federico (1901-1970), Carlo (1900-1965), Alberto (1904-1981) and Mario (1910-1992).

Federico was a naval officer in the Second World War. With his wife Luisa he had two daughters, Roberta and Carla. The family owned a villa in Cortina d'Ampezzo, one in San Martino di Codroipo, one in Percoto near Udine. Alberto married to Costanza de Asarta owned the Villa Asarta, built in the 18th century, with a huge park at Fraforeano. The estate from 1468 to 1640 belonged to the Venetian Barbarigo family, later to the Correr. In 1883 it was bought by the Asarta family originally from Spain. Carlo was a world champion in horse trials and played smaller parts in Italian films.

The Ivancich Family

Originally the family came from Dalmatia, a coastal region on the eastern Adriatic coast for centuries dominated by the Venetians. In Venice they became shipowners, merchants and diplomats. Hemingway treated them as aristocrats. In his novel "Across the River and into the Trees" Adriana Ivancich became a "Contessa". The Ivancich led the lifestyle of the traditional Venetian Nobility. They owned an important Palazzo on the Calle del Rimedio in Venice¹¹ and an imposing country house in San Michele on the banks of the Tagliamento River. The Villa was bombed by the Americans in 1944. The bombers tried to destroy an important bridge on the Tagliamento, but also hit the house. The Villa had been built in the style of the Palladian Villas in the Veneto, purportedly by the great Venetian architect Baldassare Longhena.¹² The main building was completely razed to the ground and the two side wings were gutted.

Two members of the family became very closely associated with Hemingway: Adriana (January 4th 1930 – March 24th 1983) and Gianfranco (1922-2012).

¹¹ The Palazzo Rota Ivancich is now sometimes used for exhibitions for the Biennale.

¹² Longhena (1598-1682) as builder was mentioned by Hemingway. But art historians recently attributed the plans to Francesco Contini or Giuseppe Sardi. Hemingway who was somewhat superficial in cultural affairs had heard of Longhena as the architect of the church Santa Maria della Salute, that was just opposite of his Hotel Gritti on the Canale Grande.

Their father Carlo Ivancich was murdered in June 1945 by political enemies. Hemingway fell in love with Adriana. She became the heroine of his Venice novel "Across the River and into the Trees".¹³ Gianfranco settled in Cuba and became a lifelong friend of the writer. His brother Giacomo continued the family tradition as a diplomat and became ambassador to South Africa and to the UN in New York.

The Robilant family¹⁴

It is a family of generals, diplomats and collectors. The family, originally from Piedmont, received the title of Count by the King of Sardinia. The most famous was Carlo Felice di Robilant (1826-1888), who was Italian ambassador to Vienna and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from 1885 to 1887. Edmondo di Robilant linked the family to the famous Doge Family of the Mocenigo by marrying Valentina Mocenigo.¹⁵ They had five sons, among whom Andrea and Carlo.

Andrea inherited the huge Mocenigo estate, including the historic Palazzo on the Canal Grande. He sold off most of his patrimony in order to make movies. That curiously included also a ceiling painting from the Mocenigo Palace attributed to Sebastiano Ricci (1659-1734), that he sold to Philipp of Hessen, who figured as an art agent for Hitler.¹⁶ Carlo was the one who befriended Hemingway. He lived in a part of the Mocenigo Palace that was split in apartments. For his daughter Olghina Hemingway wrote the children's story „The Good Lion”.

¹³ As the relationship between Hemingway and Adriana is extensively documented in my book "Hemingway's Venetian Muse Adriana Ivancich" (Berlin 2012) I cut this aspect short.

¹⁴ Information about the family given by Filippo di Robilant.

¹⁵ The family name Mocenigo appears also with the Franchettis and the Ivanich: Raimondo's wife was Bianca Mocenigo Rocca; the Villa of the Ivancich in San Michele called Villa Mocenigo-Ivancich.

¹⁶ Jobst Knigge: Prinz Philipp von Hessen. Hitlers Sonderbotschafter für Italien, Berlin 2009, p. 64.

The Robilants are still in Politics and in the Arts. Andrea di Robilant has published three novels dealing with his Venetian family history.¹⁷ Alessandro di Robilant (born 1953) is a film director.



Palazzo Mocenigo

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¹⁷ “A Venetian Affair”, “Lucia: A Venetian Life in the Age of Napoleon” and “Chasing the Rose”.

On September 21st 1948 Hemingway and his wife Mary plus their blue Buick arrived by ship from Cuba in Genoa. From there they went straight to Cortina d'Ampezzo, where the writer had been on a skiing holiday with his first wife Hadley in the 1920ies. As the snow season had not arrived Hemingway thought of trout fishing in the area. He asked the owner of a shop for sporting equipment, Luigi Zambelli, for advice. Zambelli directed him to Federico Kechler, who was a known fishing expert.¹⁸ Both met at the Bar of the Hotel Posta. It was the beginning of a great friendship. Hemingway called him "Kech" and considered him "a gentleman of great class". Baker writes: His "English was so impeccable that he might have been mistaken for a retired officer of the Royal Navy".¹⁹ Federico presented his wife Maria Luisa, his brother Alberto and his wife Costanza de Asarta to the Hemingways.



Hemingway and Alberto Kechler at Villa Kechler in Cortina winter 1948/49 (John F. Kennedy Library Boston)

¹⁸ See paper Davide Loriglia „Hemingway in Lignano Sabbiadoro and in Friuli Venezia Giulia, presented on June 26th 2014 at the Hemingway Conference Venice.

¹⁹ Baker, Hemingway, p. 468.

In October 1948 Federico Kechler took Hemingway to his fishing reserve in the 1200 meter high Anterselva Valley in the middle of the Dolomite Mountains.²⁰ There he taught him the fishing technique called in Italian “mosca secca”, meaning you don’t put your bait in the water, but let it only slightly touch the surface. On October 24th Ernest and Mary visited Federico’s brother Alberto in his Villa at Fraforeano near Udine. They signed the guest book thanking for the “lovely visit and a good shoot”.

After a short return to Cortina the couple arrived in Venice on October 30th. On December 10th Hemingway was guest in the Villa of Carlo Kechler in San Martino di Codroipo, also near Udine. There they enjoyed a day of partridge shooting.

While in Venice the Hemingways stayed in the “Hotel Gritti” and on the island of Torcello. In November Federico Kechler introduced Nanyuki Franchetti, another hunting enthusiast, to Hemingway. Nanyuki invited the American to his hunting lodge in the middle of the lagoon of Caorle. There at the “Valley of San Gaetano” the baron owned extensive land used for agricultural activities after regulating the waters in the swamped area by digging canals. Enough open water areas were left for duck shooting. For the first shooting Hemingway was accompanied by his wife Mary, who also took part. Ernest shot down 18 ducks.²¹

²⁰ See paper Davide Lorigliola.

²¹ Mary Hemingway: How it was, p. 225.







The hunting lodge with the boat moorings of the Franchetti estate at San Gaetano (Photos by the author)

On the 11th of December 1948 Hemingway visited the place for the second time. The company came from San Martino di Codroipo where Hemingway had stayed for some days on the Kechler estate. Hemingway was accompanied by Carlo Kechler, his chauffeur Adamo De Simon drove the blue Buick Hemingway had brought from Cuba. They had started in the early morning and stopped for lunch in the Villa Fraforeano, owned by Alberto Kechler. There they talked about the war and arrived late at Latisana, where Carlo had fixed an appointment with Adriana Ivancich.

The day became very important for Ernest, because it marked the encounter with his forthcoming Venetian Muse, 18 year old Adriana Ivancich. At a

crossroad near Latisana Adriana had waited in the rain.²² From the meeting point the company drove to the Franchetti estate San Gaetano. For two days Hemingway was part of a duck shooting party. The experience where the hunters were placed in barrels in the middle of the water was later described quite realistically in the novel "Across the River and into the Trees". That part is now considered by Hemingway experts as the best part of the book.

Hemingway was lodged in the main building of the hunting lodge. The lodge had a big fireplace where the hunters were warming up emptying bottles of Grappa after being cramped for hours in the barrels in the cold and damp air. Adriana was the only woman in the party. The 18-year old girl had never read anything of the famous writer. Hemingway, nearly fifty years old, was "struck like lightning", he confessed later in a letter to Adriana.²³ It was the beginning of a five year long platonic love affair for Hemingway.

In the next weeks they were meeting regularly mostly in Harry's Bar, the favorite place also for the other members of the Venetian noble and VIP society. Then Mamma Dora Ivancich wanted to know whom her daughter dated so assiduously. And Hemingway was invited to the Palazzo Ivancich in the Calle del Rimedio at the corner of Rio Santa Maria Formosa and the Ponte Pasqualigo.²⁴ It was an important Palazzo in which in the past Richard Wagner and Franz Liszt had played the piano for festive occasions. There Hemingway also met Adriana's aunt Emma. By chance he had met her before in Cortina in 1923 during a ski holiday with his first wife Hadley. At that time Emma was accompanied by the pianist Renata Borgatti (1894-1964). In the Palazzo Ivancich hung a portrait of Borgatti made by John Singer Sargent in 1921.²⁵

Later in December the Hemingways rented a villa in Cortina for a longer ski holiday. The villa Aprile was not far from the house of the Kechlers and there was a new occasion for meetings. In March they were back at the "Gritti". From there he went to stay in San Martino di Codroipo as guest of the Kechlers. He

²² The story of Adriana and Ernest Hemingway is described sufficiently in my book "Hemingway's Venetian Muse Adriana Ivancich", Berlin 2012, so that I spare out the details.

²³ Letter Feb. 15th 1954, quote Jeffrey Meyers: Hemingway. A Biography, London 1985, p. 440.

²⁴ The Address is Castello No. 4421.

²⁵ There is a link to the Franchetti-Family. Mimi Franchetti, the daughter of opera composer Alberto Franchetti, had a lesbian affair with Renata Borgatti. The relationship is portrayed in the satirical novel "Extraordinary Women" by Compton Mackenzie.

needed a rest after contracting a serious eye infection in Cortina. In this winter he was reading among others Irwin Shaw's "Young Lions". A copy full of notes, not very pleasing for the author, he left in the villa.²⁶ Mary and Irwin had been lovers in London, just before Ernest met her. He believed Shaw had portrayed his wife as Louise in his book. Hemingway also left a 1948 edition of "A Farewell to Arms" with dedications to the Kechlers.

The usual meeting place for Hemingway and the High Society in Venice was Harry's Bar near the St. Mark's Square. The bar was founded in 1931 by Giuseppe Cipriani who became a close friend for Hemingway, the writer being one of his best guests. Mary Hemingway noted in her diary on March 18th 1949: "Met Papa at Harry's friends there – Count Carlo di Robilant and his wife Caroline, Tripcovitches, Princess Aspasia of Greece with whom, Papa said, he had an afternoon of good, solid drinks and talks while I was away, Baron Nanyuki Franchetti, Prince Tassilo Fürstenberg, a couple Windisch-Graetzes and other once-Austrians, the Duke of Norfolk's younger brother and his pretty wife, Countess Lili Volpi and that enduring, endearing old Countess Amelia de Reali."²⁷

In May 1949 Hemingway was back in Cuba. A few months later Nanyuki Franchetti came to visit. Both went on a fishing trip to the Bahamas and frequented the Havana Club de Cazadores to shoot clay pigeons.²⁸ In summer 1949 Hemingway's ex-wife Pauline Pfeiffer, with whom he stayed in good contact, travelled with her two boys Patrick and Gregory to Venice. There they were received by Adriana Ivancich, the Franchettis and the Kechlers.

In January 1950 the Hemingways checked in again at the "Gritti" on the Canale Grande. Hemingway met again with his aristocratic friends, especially with Adriana Ivancich, but also with Nanyuki Franchetti and Carlo di Robilant. On January 22nd 1950 they were guests of Carlo Kechler in his villa in San Martino

²⁶ The signed copy carries the date March 2nd 1949 and January 22nd 1950. Information by Davide Lorioglia.

²⁷ Printed in "Holiday Magazine", June 1968.

²⁸ Originally Hemingway had invited Federico Kechler for the fishing trip to the Bahamas. On February 22nd 1949 in a long letter Hemingway had prepared Kechler for the trip, fishing swordfish, tuna, and barracuda. Federico should not care to bring much clothes: "On the boat and around the Finca we walk bare feet and dress more or less like Robinson Crusoe." At the end Federico Kechler did not go. (The original of the letter was not available for me, only a translation in Italian made on behalf of Alessandro Kechler).

di Codroipo, where they stayed for two days.²⁹ Ernest had brought a tin of grey caviar and two bottles of gin. They also visited a country house of the Franchetti near Treviso.

In January 1950 Hemingway wrote two little fairy tales for the nephew of Adriana, Gherardo Scapinelli, and for the daughter of Carlo di Robilant, then 16 year old Olghina. They were called “The Good Lion” and “The Faithfull Bull”. The Lion is a good natured animal that does not eat men but likes spaghetti with scampi and drinks tomato juice. He has wings and flies from Africa to Venice and even visits Harry’s Bar.³⁰ Hemingway also wrote a fantasy story about Adriana and himself. In the story Adriana becomes a “Black Horse”- so the title. It’s the love of a person called Hemingstein and the black horse called Ivancich. Hemingstein invites the horse to the Bar of the Hotel Ritz in Paris, where they meet a group of people, among them Afdera Franchetti, sister of Nanyuki, Carlo di Robilant and Gianfranco Ivancich. The story was so intimate, that it was not published.³¹



For some weeks during that winter, Ernest and Mary went skiing again in Cortina, and Adriana joined them. Mary complained: “Adriana ... was becoming

²⁹ Information by Davide Lorigliola.

³⁰ Both tales were published with drawings of Adriana Ivancich in the American magazine “Holiday” in March 1951. Editions in Italian were published in 1976, 1980, and 2013. Olghina later became a well known personality of the Roman Dolce Vita society and a writer of VIP gossip.

³¹ Adriana Ivancich: La Torre Bianca, Milan 1980, p. 166.

our constant companion.”³² Mary broke her left ankle and Nanyuki Franchetti his leg.

At the beginning of March 1950 Hemingway left Venice to return to Cuba. In the meantime Adriana’s brother Gianfranco settled on the island, working as an agent for a Venice shipping company. Hemingway and Gianfranco became close friends, a friendship that would last up to Hemingway’s death. Adriana’s brother Gianfranco – ten years older than her - had been fighting in the Second World War with the Italian and German troops in North Africa. He had been badly wounded in the foot, which nearly had to be amputated. Back in Italy after the Armistice he joined the partisans and worked for the American secret service OSS.

After the war Gianfranco wanted to emigrate to New York. He spent some time there in the circles of the Italian High Society. The Venetian industrialist Count Giorgio Cini jr. – who at the time was sentimentally linked to the actress Merle Oberon – offered him a job at his shipping agency Sidarma in Cuba.³³ That was quite independent of the fact, that Hemingway was living there.

When Gianfranco met Hemingway at the Bar of the “Gritti” in Venice in January 1949 he had just come back from New York. They talked about their common war experiences. Both had been wounded in the legs. Gianfranco was still limping. In spite of their difference of age they felt as “compagni d’arme”, as Gianfranco put it. When the young Italian announced that he would take up work in Cuba, Hemingway said: “I wait for you at my place.”

Gianfranco established himself in Cuba in the beginning of November 1949.³⁴ As he had no place to stay, he was lodged in a guest room of the Finca Vigía. Hemingway had a deep feeling for him and treated him like a “surrogate son”³⁵ or “a male version of a vicarious substitute for Adriana”, “a mirror image of Adriana” as biographer Jeffrey Meyers put it.³⁶ Hemingway wrote to Adriana,

³² Mary Welsh Hemingway: *How it was*, London 1976, p. 253.

³³ The company was founded by Vittorio Cini, who was receiving the title Count by King Vittorio Emanuele III. After the death of his son Giorgio he created the known Fondazione Giorgio Cini.

³⁴ Gianfranco Ivancich: *Da una felice Cuba a Ketchum*, Venice 2008.

³⁵ Jeffrey Meyers: *Hemingway. A Biography*, London 1985, p. 429.

³⁶ Meyers, *Hemingway*, pp. 442.

that Gianfranco cheered him up, when he longed for her.³⁷ Often they would talk of Venice and the Veneto.

His job with the shipping agency did not last long. In April 1950 he was out of work. Biographer Michael Reynolds judged he was not made for “tedious employment”.³⁸ Inspired by his mentor, Gianfranco wanted to embark on his own writing career.³⁹ Hemingway encouraged him. His writing was “no waste of time”, he said.⁴⁰ Apparently Gianfranco finished a novel and Hemingway did everything to have the book published with Scribner’s. But nothing came out of it.

After having lived for at least three years as a permanent lodger at the Finca Vigía, he bought himself a farm near Rancho Boyeros. The family had sold some land in the Veneto region and Hemingway also had advanced some money.⁴¹ Also later the writer supported his Italian friend, often in financial difficulties. He gave him the last manuscript of the “Old Man and the Sea”, to sell it in case he may be in need of money, he wrote to Adriana.⁴² On and off Gianfranco stayed in Cuba for seven years. In 1956 he married Cristina Sandoval, a woman from the island.

³⁷ Letter Hemingway to Adriana April 21st 1950.

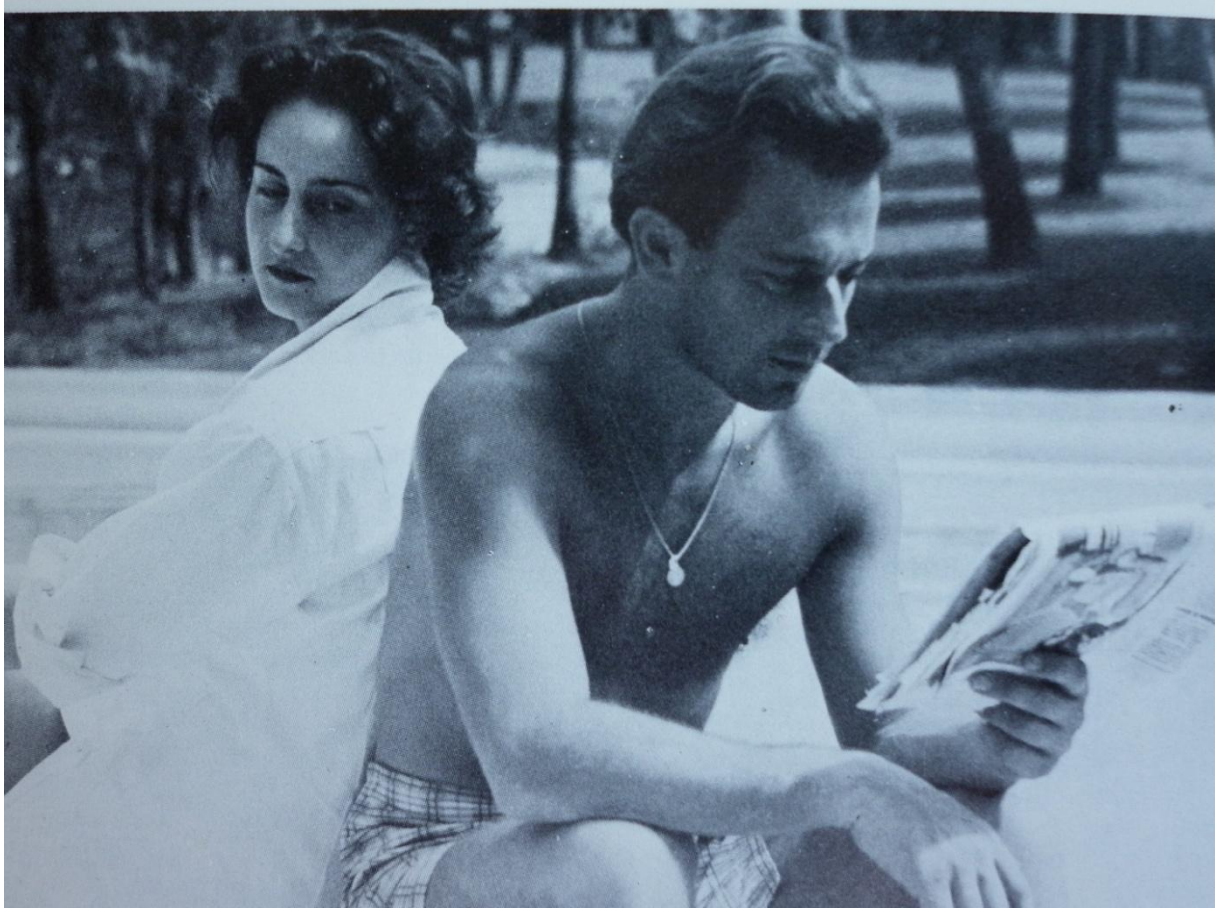
³⁸ Michael Reynolds: Hemingway: The Final Years, New York/London 1999, p. 218.

³⁹ Letter to Harvey Breit, July 3th 1956, Ernest Hemingway: Selected Letters 1917-1961, ed. by Carlos Baker, New York 1981, p. 861.

⁴⁰ Letter to Adriana May 9th 1950.

⁴¹ Bernice Kert: The Hemingway Women, New York/London 1983, p. 469. Letter Hemingway to Adriana July 19th 1953.

⁴² Letter June 16th 1952.



Adriana and Gianfranco Ivancich at Hemingway's Pool in Cuba (J.F. Kennedy Library)

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On September 7th 1950 the novel "Across the River and into the Trees" was published with a dust-jacket designed by Adriana. It seems Adriana played an important part in breaking his writers block, that had lasted since 1940 first to write "Across the River", but also later for "The Old Man and the Sea", published in autumn 1952.⁴³

Already the question was circulating: who was the mysterious young Countess of Venice. Was she a portrait of a living person? At the lagoon Afdera

⁴³ See Jobst Knigge "Influence of his Venetian Muse Adriana Ivancich on Hemingway's writing", paper presented at Hemingway Conference, Venice, June 2014.

Franchetti was spreading the news, that it was her Hemingway had depicted.⁴⁴ Afdera was 17 years old, but already looking for the limelight. Later she married American actor Henry Fonda, whom she got to know while he was shooting the film “War and Peace” in Italy. Afdera was an eccentric person, counted by Oriana Fallaci among the Unpleasant Dozen.⁴⁵



Afdera Franchetti and Henry Fonda (fanpix.net)

It was a far too open secret, that Adriana had inspired the main character Renata in the book. Both have the same looks, are 19 years old, the father killed, both live in an old palazzo in the heart of Venice, both have written poems.

How much Hemingway admired the aristocratic heritage and lifestyle and despised social climbers of new money he expressed in the words of his alter ego Colonel Cantwell in the novel when he speaks of Renata/Adriana: “This one has a fine blood line too, and she can go forever. Most of our own lovely beauties come from soda counters, and they do not know their grandfather’s last name.”⁴⁶ And he hates the Nouveaux Riches in Harry’s Bar. Cantwell observed a rich man of Milan with a young beautiful girl at his side. “The

⁴⁴ Mary Welsh, p. 273. Later Afdera also pretended to be the model of Holly Golightly, main character of Truman Capote’s “Breakfast at Tiffany’s”, presented in the film version by Audrey Hepburn.

⁴⁵ Oriana Fallaci: Gli antipatici, Milan 1963. Afdera’s autobiography was called “Never before Noon”. She was still living at the time of the present publication.

⁴⁶ Hemingway: Across the River and into the Trees, London 1950, p. 205.

Colonel wondered how much taxes the man had escaped to buy the sleek girl in her long mink coat and the convertible he had seen the chauffeur take up the long winding ramp to lock away. The pair looked at him with the bad manners of their kind.”⁴⁷ In another scene Renata asked: “Do you think I was a snob because I come from an old family? We’re the ones who are no snobs. The snobs are what you call jerks and the people with all the new money.”⁴⁸

Near the town of Latisana on the Tagliamento River, named in the book, the country estate of the Ivancich is located. Hemingway had visited the place and in the novel he mentions the temporary bridge over the River. The old bridge was bombed by the Americans in 1944. “They made a curve and crossed the Tagliamento on a temporary bridge. ...The blown bridge was being repaired with a snarl of riveting hammers, and eight hundred yards away the smashed buildings and outbuildings of what was now a ruined country house built by Longhena showed where the mediums had dropped their loads.”⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Hemingway, *Across*, p.34.

⁴⁸ Hemingway, *Across*, p. 218.

⁴⁹ Hemingway, *Across*, p. 14. The name of the builder obviously was suggested by Gianfranco Ivancich, to give the place more importance, but as it is established, that he was not the architect. (G. Ivancich: *Cuba*, p. 14).





Ruins of the bombed Country House of the Ivancich on the banks of the Tagliamento (photo by the author)

Colonel Cantwell probably referred to the Kechler villa at San Martino di Codroipo, when he indicated the place where he would like to be buried, “way out at the edge of the grounds, but in sight of the graceful house”.⁵⁰

When Hemingway asked Adriana whether he could give his female character in his novel “Across the River and Into the Trees” her looks, she answered: “In the book there are also Nanuck, Carlo Robilant, Cipriani: why should only I say no.”⁵¹ Carlos Baker writes: Hemingway “was enough of a snob to want to make fictional use of his new friendships with the families of Franchetti, Di Robilant, Kechler and Ivancich”.⁵²

⁵⁰ So Martina Mastandrea in her paper; Roberta Kechler to Davide Lorigliola .

⁵¹ Adriana Ivancich, *La Torre Bianca*, p. 92.

⁵² Baker, Hemingway, p. 472.

In deed the Barone Alvarito in the book was modelled after Franchetti and the Count Andrea after Carlo di Robilant. Hemingway describes Alvarito/Franchetti: "He was almost tall. Beautifully built in his town clothes, and he was the shyest man the Colonel had ever known. He was not shy from ignorance, nor from being ill at ease, nor from any defect. He was basically shy as certain animals are."⁵³

And the Conte Andrea: "At the bar a tall, very tall, man, with a ravaged face of great breeding, merry blue eyes and the long, loose-coupled body of a buffalo wolf." In their clothes Hemingway's aristocratic friends showed understatement. Il Conte wore a "handsome tweed coat that must have been entering at least its twentieth year."⁵⁴

Before Hemingway had left Venice in spring 1950 he had invited Adriana and her mother Dora to Cuba. Dora accepted also because that would give her an opportunity to see her son Gianfranco on the island. Biographer Jeffrey Meyers accused Dora to push her daughter in a liaison with Hemingway: She "wanted her daughter to restore the family fortunes by marrying a rich and famous writer".⁵⁵

Hemingway had supported the trip with a substantial check. Mother and daughter arrived in Havana on October 27th 1950 and were lodged on the Finca. Their stay that lasted until February 7th 1951 was portrayed at length in my booklet "Hemingway's Venetian Muse". The departure was speeded up by the gossip about Hemingway and Adriana now circulating in the lagoon society.

In summer 1953 Hemingway is back in Europe. At Le Havre Gianfranco Ivancich is waiting with Kechler's driver Adamo De Simon in a Lancia Aurelia. They tour Paris, the South of France, Pamplona and Madrid, before the Hemingways start their journey to Africa.⁵⁶ Hemingway came back to Venice only in 1954. In the meantime he stayed in intensive letter contact with his beloved Adriana.

After his two air crashes in Africa Hemingway is back in Venice in March 1954. He returns to his favorite Hotel Gritti. There in his room he receives his old

⁵³ Hemingway, Across, p. 111.

⁵⁴ Hemingway, Across, p. 68. See below Hotchner's description of Kechler's dress.

⁵⁵ Meyers, Hemingway, p. 447.

⁵⁶ G. Ivancich, Cuba, pp. 57.

Italian friends among them Federico Kechler. Aaron Hotchner who came to meet the Hemingways in Venice described Federico in his eccentric outfit: “He was a polite, amusing, chic, nimble Venetian who on the occasion was wearing suede shoes, matching suede gloves, and almost matching suede jacket, and a severely weathered, misshapen snap-brim fedora which took the curse off all that matching suede. He spoke perfect Cambridge English and was considered one of Venice’s top marksmen and all-round sportsman.”⁵⁷ And when Federico left, Hemingway commented: “What a damn classy gent he is.”⁵⁸ Federico invited the Hemingways to his property in Percoto. He sent his driver De Simon with the Lancia Aurelia B21. De Simon took the liberty to make a stopover in Udine to take the couple to a restaurant in the Hotel Friuli that was a meeting



Hemingway arriving in Udine (Il Friuli di Hemingway)



Hemingway with his Driver De Simon and in front of the Restaurant Bella Venezia at Latisana (Il Friuli di Hemingway)

⁵⁷ Hotchner, A.E.: Papa Hemingway. A Personal Memoir, New York 1999, p. 88.

⁵⁸ Hotchner, Papa, 1999, p. 91.

place for the local artists and intellectuals. A dozen of these were waiting for the famous writer. It was also an occasion for the local press to take photos and write a piece on Hemingway's presence in Udine.⁵⁹

Then from April 9th to the 15th he stayed in Federico Kechler's Villa in Percoto. This was a time of complete rest for the exhausted writer. One of the few documented trips he made from there was to the new town Torviscosa, inaugurated by Mussolini in 1940.⁶⁰ At the end of the stay Hemingway wrote, playing with his name, in the Kechler guestbook "With much love and gratitude Mr. Papa Ernesto Kechler Hemingway".

⁵⁹ See *Il Gazzettino* and *Messaggero Veneto* both April 11th 1954. Also Information by Davide Lorigliola.

⁶⁰ Information by Davide Lorigliola.



At the Kechler estate in Percoto, from left to right: Marino Facco de Lagarda, Adriana Ivancich, Roberta Kechler, Maria Luisa Kechler, Carla Kechler and Hemingway (Archivio Biblioteca Comunale Lignano Sabbiadoro)



Villa Kechler in Percoto

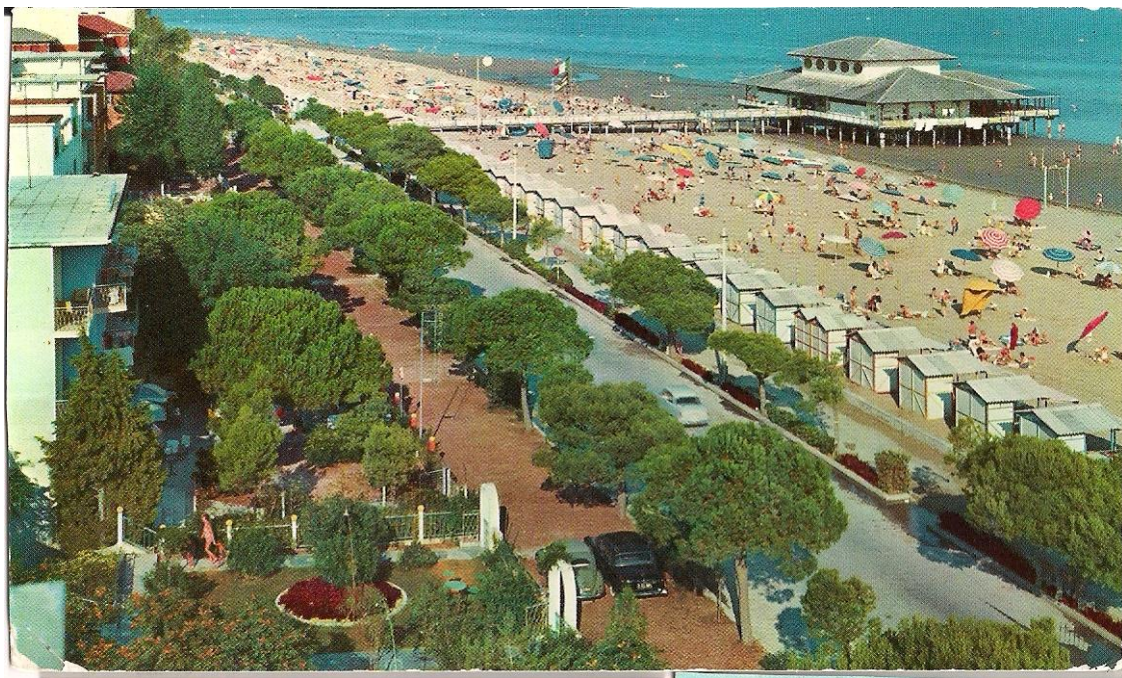
Very early on Thursday April 15th the Kechlers and Hemingways, with driver De Simon on the wheel, the company leaves Percoto for Venice. They have a break in a restaurant in Latisana. In the late morning they arrive in Lignano on the mouth of the Tagliamento River. A year earlier Alberto had started the development of the pine tree covered sandy peninsula into a beach resort. The master plan of Lignano Pineta by the young architect Marcello D'Olivio (1921-1991) took shape. Hemingway felt reminded of his time living in Key West/Florida from 1931 to 1939. He commented: "But this is Florida, or better, it's the Italian Florida." Alberto generously offered the writer a piece of land, where he could build a house. Hemingway stayed only two hours in Lignano. But his short presence at the spot later was extensively exploited for publicity reasons. A Hemingway park with his statue was created. A Hemingway cultural prize established and exhibitions organized.⁶¹

⁶¹ Information partly coming from Davide Lorigliola.



Hemingway at Lignano with Luisa Kechler and driver De Simon

(Photo Mario Kechler, Collezione Antonio D'Olivio)



Lignano Sabbiadoro in 1960 (postcard)

On May 5th 1954 there was an American style dinner organized in the Ivancich Palace, followed by a goodbye party in the Gritti.⁶² Hemingway said to Hotchner: “How can anyone live in New York, when there is Venice and Paris?”

⁶² Hotchner: Papa, 1999, pp. 94.

The next day the Hemingways left the lagoon, never to return. Hemingway had stayed three times in Venice, altogether 10 months at the lagoon, in Cortina and in the country villas of his friends around Udine.⁶³

Hemingway and Adriana exchanged letters until 1955, when she broke off. Later she married the German nobleman Rudolf Count von Rex with whom she had twin boys. She could never free herself of the dominating figure Hemingway had played in her life. In 1980 she published a book about their relationship under the title "La Torre Bianca". She killed herself on March 24th 1983.

Gianfranco was the only member of the Venetian noble society that stayed in faithful contact with the writer. The news that Hemingway had died hit him in Venice. He did not hesitate to travel to the States: London, Los Angeles, Salt Lake City, Sun Valley. He was one of the few friends who were present at Hemingway's funeral in Ketchum/Idaho in July 1961.

⁶³ Sept. 21st 1954 Hemingway wrote to Federico Kechler from Cuba: "Yesterday we spoke of Percoto and how happy we had been there with you and Luisa and Roberta and Carla. We spoke of how much we were attached to you, how good you have been with us, how much I regret to have been in a bad shape and how all our plans for Spain were ruined." (The original letter was unavailable for me and existed only in an Italian translation made on behalf of Alessandro Kechler.)

Appendix: Hemingway and his cars. Ruoteclassiche No. 64 July/August 1993

The Kechlers had a driver called Adamo De Simon, with whom Hemingway developed a close friendship. It was an example of Hemingway's relationship with simple people like his boatsman Gregorio in Cuba, or the boatsman in San Gaetano, Fiorindo Gilotto. In autumn of 1953 the Kechlers sent De Simon in a Lancia Aurelia B10 to the French port of Le Havre to meet the Hemingways on their next trip to Europe. They went to Paris and then in October through Spain.

There are two other stories of Italian cars from Udine linked to Hemingway. By arrangement of the Kechlers and of Gianfranco Ivancich at the beginning of September 1956 the journalist Mario Casamassima left Udine on board of a rented Lancia in the direction of Le Havre to accompany the Hemingways on a long tour of the Spanish corridas.⁶⁴ In August 1959 Casamassima transferred a Lancia Flaminia bought for Hemingway in Udine for more than 5 000 000 Lire to Madrid to deliver the car to Hemingway.⁶⁵

Also Gianfranco accompanied Hemingway on his last trip to Spain in the "Dangerous Summer" of 1959, when the writer celebrated his 60th birthday. Later Gianfranco Ivancich transferred the car back to Italy.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Casamassima is mentioned in „Dangerous Summer“.

⁶⁵ The bill for the car sale is in the Hemingway Archive.

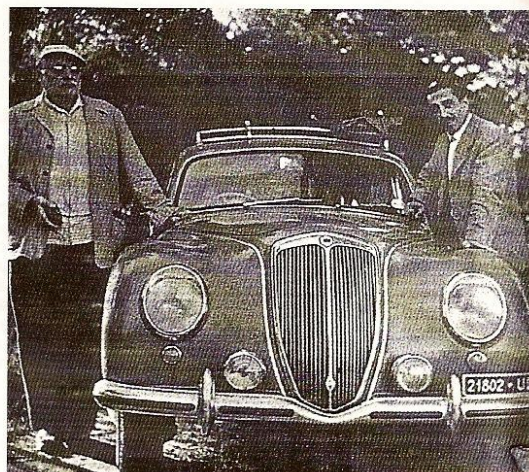
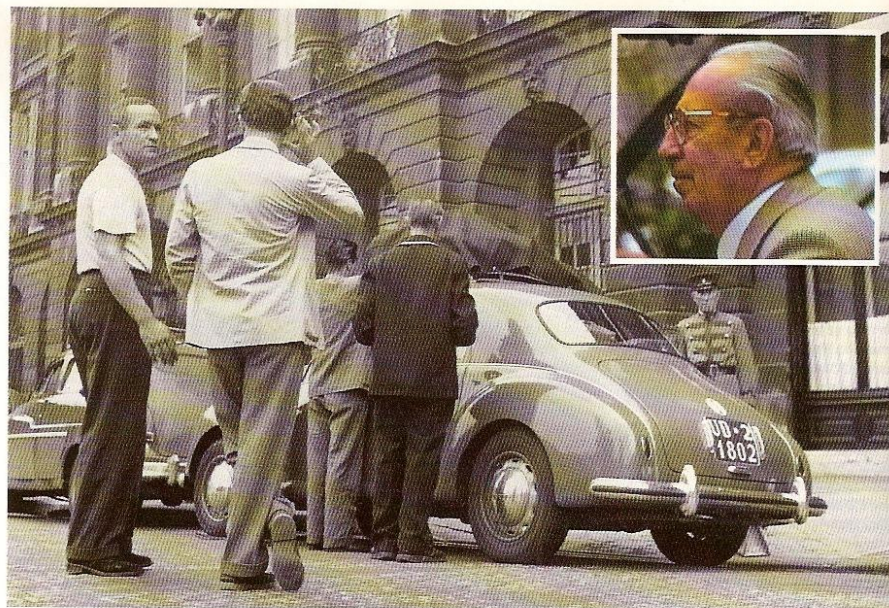
⁶⁶ Gianfranco Ivancich: Cuba, pp. 104.

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do (Cipro, Islanda, Cina, Africa e via dicendo) per il grande schermo non meno che per l'allora giovane TV italiana. Lasciate poi cinespre e telecamere, è oggi un piccolo ma affermato e raffinato editore di volumi d'arte e di storia. Vive vicino a Udine in una bellissima casa di campagna, dove ha anche sede la casa editrice che porta il suo nome. Nel garage una Moto Guzzi Falcone del 1951 perfettamente conservata, con cui di tanto in tanto va a spasso e che non ha alcuna intenzione di cedere. Conserva un'agenda con appunti di diario di quell'avventuroso viaggio, che rievoca con precisione di dettagli e toni qua e là gustosamente scanzonati. «Arrivai a Le Havre, con l'Aurelia, il 7 settembre. Hemingway sbarcò dal transatlantico Ile de France e lo condussi a Parigi. Lì conobbi diversi personaggi del giro dei suoi amici (va detto che lui trattava anche me come amico). Ricordo Rupert Bevilacqua, un nobile inglese, un marchese o giù di lì, Peter Wirtzel, uno sceneggiatore, marito di Deborah Kerr. E poi Audrey Hepburn, il regista William Wyler e Gary Cooper, amico di Hemingway e molto simpatico ma di un'avarizia inenarrabile: Hemingway raccontava che quando lo aveva ospitato a Cuba, lo aveva anche fatto accompagnare in giro da un suo uomo di fiducia, al quale il famoso attore alla fine lasciò una mancia di mezzo dollaro...». In uno di quei giorni parigini Gary Cooper propose a Hemingway di acquistare la sua Bentley. Hemingway chiese consiglio a Mario e questi gli rispose: «Ma perché vuoi scambiare la tua bella Lancia con quel trattore?».

Il viaggio riprese dopo una decina di giorni. «Il 17 settembre lasciammo Parigi per Angoulême, il 18 eravamo a Saint-Jean-de-Luz, dove restammo quattro giorni, il 21 eravamo a Logroño, dove assistemmo alla prima corrida. Il 24 raggiungemmo l'Escorial, scendendo all'Hotel Felipe II, nell'appartamento che era stato occupato fino al giorno prima da Sofia Loren, impegnata nelle riprese di El Cid.

«Il 27 settembre — continua Mario — vedemmo alla TV un servizio sul ponte di Per chi suona la campana, il ponte su un torrente della Sierra de Guadarrama che i miliziani fecero saltare. L'indomani mattina, con l'Aurelia, partimmo per an-



darlo a cercare e quando lo trovammo mi resi conto che era nettamente più piccolo di quello visto nella ricostruzione del film: era tuttavia in una posizione di vitale importanza.

«Facemmo diverse gite a Madrid e in altre città. Il 4 ottobre, sulla strada per Ávila, incontrammo il Circo Zavatta, tre poveri saltimbanchi, marito, moglie e figlia, di origine friulana. Il loro carrozzone era targato UD, come la nostra Aurelia. Ci fermammo e familiarizzammo, brindando all'incontro. Assistemmo poi ad altre corride e novilladas ad Aranjuez, Peguerino, Saragozza, Madrid. Nella capitale accompagnavamo a volte la moglie di Hemingway, Mary, dal parrucchiere, in Pla-

za de la República: in quella piazza ricordo attese estenuanti, perché se Mary ci chiedeva di andarla a riprendere alle 17, potevano arrivare le 17,30, le 18 e oltre.

«La mia performance più significativa alla guida della B12 è dei giorni intorno alla metà di ottobre: il tratto Escorial-Madrid, tratto misto-veloce molto impegnativo, a 124 km di media oraria. Erano con noi due giornalisti tedeschi, la cui compagnia non era molto gradita a Hemingway, e il suo futuro biografo Hotchner, che credo non amasse molto di più, o almeno così mi sembrava in quel momento. Bene, tremavano tutti come foglie.

«Va detto che a Madrid la mac-

china aveva avuto qualche cura speciale da parte di un meccanico torinese trovato per caso, che ne conosceva perfettamente tutti i segreti: forse aveva lavorato alla Lancia, non ricordo. Credo che nei due giorni in cui gliela lasciai in officina me l'abbia un po' compressa e abbia indurito le sospensioni: so che poi era più scattante e stabile di prima.

«Il viaggio proseguì ancora in lungo e in largo: Ciudad Real, di nuovo Logroño, Burgos, Pamplona, Saint-Jean-de-Luz ancora, San Sebastián, all'albergo San Sebastián, dove Hemingway trovò ancora l'albergatore Juan Quintana Urra, amico degli anni Venti, del primo viaggio in Spagna, entrato

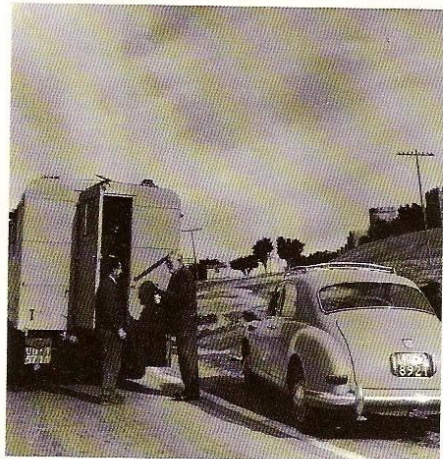
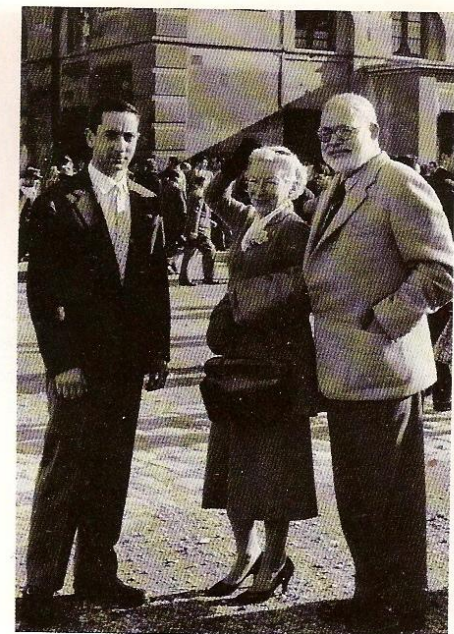
Per il viaggio attraverso la Francia e la Spagna del 1953 Hemingway affittò in Italia la Lancia Aurelia B10 che vediamo in queste immagini. La guidava un autista udinese divenuto poi amico dello scrittore, Adamo De Simon. Di questi e della vettura Hemingway scrive nel volume The Dangerous Summer (L'estate pericolosa). De Simon, che vive ancora a Udine, è ritratto insieme a Hemingway durante quel viaggio e, nel riquadro a colori, oggi, nella sua città, dove è titolare di una impresa di pompe funebri.



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Con la Flaminia, guidata da un autista di cui non si conosce il nome, partì per la Jugoslavia dove doveva andare a sistemare alcune pendenze relative a diritti d'autore di Hemingway, ma su una strada della Dalmazia la vettura ebbe un terribile incidente: gli occupanti se la cavarono quasi per miracolo, ma la Flaminia finì praticamente distrutta.

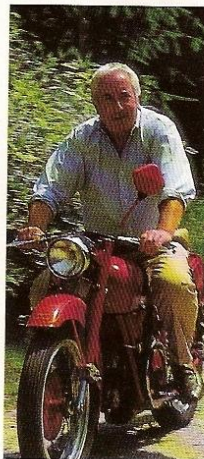
Fra tutti gli amici di Hemingway, Gianfranco fu forse il più intimo. Di lui la moglie dello scrittore, Mary, nelle sue memorie, ricorda che arrivò alla Finca Vigía, a Cuba, per fermarsi due settimane e vi rimase invece per sette anni. Sì, erano veramente amici, Ernest e Gianfranco. Questi vive oggi con la moglie Beatrice a San Michele al Tagliamento, in ciò che rimane di una grandiosa villa, attribuita a Baldassarre Longhena, che fu bombardata dagli alleati durante la seconda guerra mondiale. Ufficiale di cavalleria, Gianfranco Ivanchich combatté dapprima in Africa e successivamente tra le file dei partigiani. Quando ci presentammo all'appuntamento fissato ci invitò a colazione sotto un elegante loggiato e non mostrò di essere minimamente impressionato dal fatto che io fossi venuto fin dall'America per conoscere le sue memorie di un caro amico. Parlava con una voce forte e quasi dura. Alla proposta di mostrargli le foto di Cuba e delle automobili di Hemingway rispose che non avrebbe guardato niente fino a quando non fosse stato pronto. E, pronto, pareva non esserlo mai. Gianfranco era un soldato ed un figlio che aveva trovato il padre assassinato (proprio lì, nella villa di San Michele, nei torbidi giorni del primissimo dopoguerra). Il suo migliore amico, con il quale aveva vissuto così a lungo, a Cuba e altrove, dividendo giorni e stagioni indimenticabili, era morto. Anche Adriana, sua sorella, così strettamente legata ai ricordi di Hemingway, se n'era andata. Quale interesse poteva con-



servare per le sole automobili? Beatrice di tanto in tanto ci spiegava che, proprio a causa dell'amicizia con Hemingway, Gianfranco era stato per anni ed era tuttora bersagliato da ficcanaso di ogni rima e che qualche forma di difesa era non soltanto legittima ma necessaria. Io e Cancellieri ci guardavamo a tratti con aria interrogativa. Il pranzo proseguiva in un'atmosfera di tensione sotterranea che non accennava a stemperarsi. Alla fine ci alzammo per scattare qualche foto e ad un tratto, rispondendo a una domanda magari banale su come si andasse a cavallo con Hemingway, a Cuba, in un giorno qualsiasi, esclamò quasi gridando: «Quale giorno?

Ce ne sono stati a migliaia di giorni!». Senza più speranza, presi a raccontare allora di come Gregorio se la passasse bene a Cojimar. A quel punto, Gianfranco mi fissò e gli occhi gli si riempirono di lacrime. E mi confidò: «Per tutti questi anni avrei tanto desiderato scrivere a quella cara persona, ma temevo di venire a sapere che fosse morto. Ora lei mi sta dicendo che è vivo?». Incominciò a piangere e io mi allontanai di qualche passo per fotografare la cappella. Poco dopo, Gianfranco mi raggiunse sul viale di fronte al colonnato d'ingresso dell'ex-palazzo. Appariva rasserenato e il discorso sulle automobili divenne proponibile. «Ernest amava

	AVTO	Modello	Prezzo	TOTALE
1. Lincoln 6.3.56	3.			
MILANO - LIONE	2.300	750	700	4.350
2. VEVECH 7.3.56	B.			
LYONE - LE HAYE	6.100	1.400	350	8.450
3. SHELBY 8.3.56	B.			
LE HAYE - PARIGI	2.100	1.700	—	3.800
4. SP. 11.10.00				
DOMINICA 8.3.56	600	1.600	—	2.200
PARIGI				
5. Lincoln 10.3.56	4.400	1.750	—	11.050
PARIGI	600			
6. SP. 11.10.00				
MADRID 11.3.56	600	1.650	—	2.250
PARIGI				
7. Lincoln 12.3.56	600	1.800	—	2.400
PARIGI				
				34.500
Lincoln 20.000				20.000
(10.000 24.10/10.000 10.3.56)				14.500



Nella foto piccola, in alto, un difficile passaggio per la Land Rover di Hemingway (che assiste al recupero) durante il safari africano tra il 1953 e il 1954. In alto, al centro, Hemingway con la moglie Mary e Mario Casamassima, altro suo autista-amico italiano, che lo condusse in Spagna nel settembre 1956. La vettura era un'Aurelia B12, visibile a sinistra, in sosta sulla strada Madrid-Ávila, accanto a un furgone del Circo Zavatta. Sopra, un foglio dell'agenda su cui Casamassima annotò le tappe di quel viaggio. Qui a sinistra, Casamassima oggi, in sella alla sua Moto Guzzi Falcone del 1951.

la sua Lincoln più di qualunque altra macchina — disse —. «Amava guidarla e, dopo quella che egli chiamava "una giornata di buona scrittura", salivamo sulla Lincoln e ci dirigevamo in città per bere qualcosa. Vi erano diverse altre vetture, alla Finca Vigía, certo, una station wagon, una vecchia Buick credo, ed un'auto decappottabile. La station wagon era la più usata, la guidavamo tutti, per andare in città, per far la spesa: la chiamavamo "Pisci-corre" (dallo spagnolo pisa y corre, letteralmente pesta e corre, ossia tu schiaccia l'acceleratore e lei va, n.d.r.). «Poi ne ricordo un'altra, biancorossa. Forse una Plymouth». Era forse la Chrysler? «È possi-

bile, forse una Chrysler o una Plymouth, non ricordo». Vedendo poi la foto di Ernest seduto sulla Chrysler disse: «Sì, penso che fosse questa». Entrammo in casa e Gianfranco ci mostrò numerose fotografie appese alle pareti: vecchie immagini color seppia di nobildonne in abiti sofisticati, Ezra Pound immortalato in quella stessa stanza, e parecchi reali. «Vede — mi spiegò — eravamo abituati a questo genere di compagnie, ma Ernest Hemingway non era famoso quando mia madre lo incontrò, nel 1928. Io lo conobbi nel 1949 e mi piacque, come era piaciuto a tutti noi; ma non perché fosse famoso, mi capisce? Era

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